

Form S-3: Sage-Grouse Site-Scale Habitat Suitability Worksheet – Breeding Habitat (Nesting/Early Brood-Rearing) Directions

1. Use this worksheet to interpret field data collected using methods (LPI/LIDF and forb diversity) outlined in this appendix and summarized on the “Sage-Grouse Site-Scale Seasonal Habitat Data Summary” (form S-1).
2. Complete all site location information at the top of the form. Be sure to list all UTM coordinates or other identifying feature of all sites being summarized. Most of the information should be self-explanatory except the following:

Population: Identify the population with which the habitat is associated. This definition also includes small populations. Population names are found in figure 3.

Home Range Name: Identify the home range area using a major drainage area or other distinguishing land feature (e.g., Little Lost River home range).

Land Cover Type: Identify the cover type of the data collected. Use plant alliances or associations (Reid et al. 2002) for sagebrush or grassland communities; use www.natureserve.org/explorer (International Classification of Ecological Communities) or other sampling strata to describe the habitat (e.g., percent sagebrush categories). Use the species symbol for dominant species in the overstory and understory (table B-1), for example ARTRW8 (alliance level – Wyoming big sagebrush) or ARTRW8/FEID (association level – Wyoming big sagebrush/Idaho fescue).

Ecological Site: Refer to soil maps, range site guides, and ecological site descriptions where available and record the appropriate ecological site. Use the species symbol for dominant species in the overstory and understory.

Associated Leaks: List the two largest occupied leaks to which the breeding habitat is associated. Use identification numbers or names that are used in the statewide database.

Number of Transects: Record the number of 50-m transects completed within the land cover type.

Area Sampled: Record the total area (indicating ha/ac) of the land cover type sampled.

Site Info.:

Arid Site: Applies to sagebrush ecological sites generally in the 25–30 cm (10–12 in) precipitation zone. Wyoming big sagebrush is a common big sagebrush subspecies for this type of site.

Mesic Site: Applies to sagebrush ecological sites generally in a >30 cm (12 in) precipitation zone. Mountain big sagebrush is a common big sagebrush subspecies for this type of site.

3. Transfer data from the “Sage-Grouse Site-Scale Seasonal Habitat Data Summary” (form S-1) to this form. Enter the appropriate mean (\bar{x}) and number (n) values for the indicators in the column under \bar{x} .

Predominant Sagebrush Shape: Estimate the number of spreading (S) or columnar (C) plants (see visual shape guide, figure 13).

Perennial Forb Height (Optional): In many situations, perennial forb heights can be quite variable or provide minimal contribution to herbaceous structure. Therefore, in most cases, use perennial grass heights for the suitability rating.

Preferred Forb Availability: Check the appropriate suitability category based on data derived using the “Sage-Grouse Forb Diversity Data Form.” The suitability evaluation must be relative to ecological site potential.

4. Determine the appropriate suitability category and mark (✓) each indicator as suitable, marginal, or unsuitable.
5. Determine **site-scale suitability**. Overall suitability takes into consideration the relationship between the indicators and their relative importance. This evaluation is based on professional judgment using the indicators for guidance. Explain overall site suitability in the rationale section.
6. Indicate if **site potential** is a factor for a suitability description of marginal or unsuitable. Explain further in the rationale section.
7. Indicate **drought condition** using local weather station data or as reported for the region of concern on the National Weather Service website: www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/climate/research/us-drought-monthly.html.
8. Attach field data sheet(s) and photographs used for this site-scale description.
9. Provide a copy of this form to the state wildlife agency's sage-grouse coordinator.